Soviet Cinema Quotes

Memorable Lines from 1950-1992

With Russian Text, Transliteration, and Cultural Context

About This Collection

This book compiles memorable quotes from Soviet cinema spanning four decades (1950-1992). Many of these lines transcended their films to become part of everyday Russian speech, serving as cultural references that Russians use in conversation today.

Each entry includes the original Russian text, transliteration for pronunciation, word-by-word literal translation to show grammatical structure, natural English translation, and cultural context explaining how the quote is used in modern conversation.

Quotes marked as "Common Expression: Yes" have entered the Russian language as idioms or catchphrases used beyond their cinematic origins.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Я спортсмен, комсомолец и просто красавец!
Transliteration:	*Ya sportsmen, komsomoletz i prosto krasavetz!*
Literal:	I athlete, Komsomol-member and simply handsome-man
English:	I'm an athlete, a Komsomol member, and simply a handsome guy!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used ironically to boast about oneself, often when someone is clearly being ridiculous. The phrase became a popular way to mock self-promotion.

White Sun of the Desert (1970)	
Russian:	Восток — дело тонкое!
Transliteration:	*Vostok — delo tonkoye!*
Literal:	East — matter delicate
English:	The East is a delicate matter!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used when dealing with complex, culturally sensitive, or unpredictable situations that require careful handling. Originally about Eastern cultures, now applied to any tricky situation.

The Twelve Chairs (1971)	
Russian:	Лёд тронулся, господа присяжные заседатели!
Transliteration:	*Lyod tronulsya, gospoda prisyazhnyye zasedateli!*
Literal:	Ice moved, gentlemen jury members
English:	The ice has broken, ladies and gentlemen of the jury!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used when a long-awaited change finally begins to happen, when progress starts after a period of stagnation. Implies

	relief that something is finally moving forward.

The Irony of Fate (1975)	
Russian:	Какая гадость эта ваша заливная рыба!
Transliteration:	*Kakaya gadost' eta vasha zalivnaya ryba!*
Literal:	What disgust this your aspic fish
English:	How disgusting is this aspic fish of yours!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used humorously to express dislike for something, especially food. Often quoted when someone wants to complain about a dish in an exaggerated, theatrical way.

Carnival Night (1956)	
Russian:	Есть ли жизнь на Марсе, нет ли жизни на Марсе, это науке неизвестно.
Transliteration:	*Yest' li zhizn' na Marse, net li zhizni na Marse, eto nauke neizvestno.*
Literal:	Is there life on Mars, isn't there life on Mars, this to-science unknown
English:	Whether there is life on Mars or there isn't life on Mars, this is unknown to science.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used when something is uncertain or when experts don't have a definitive answer. Often used sarcastically to dismiss speculation about something unknowable.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Наши люди в булочную на такси не ездят!
Transliteration:	*Nashi lyudi v bulochnuyu na taksi ne yezdyat!*
Literal:	Our people to bakery on taxi not ride
English:	Our people don't take a taxi to the bakery!
Common Expression:	**Yes**

Meaning & Usage:	Used to criticize extravagance or wastefulness for trivial matters. Suggests that ordinary people don't waste resources on unnecessary luxury.

White Sun of the Desert (1970)	
Russian:	Таможня даёт добро.
Transliteration:	*Tamozhnya dayot dobro.*
Literal:	Customs gives good
English:	Customs gives the green light.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Permission granted, approval given. Widely used in everyday situations to indicate that something has been approved or cleared.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Птичку жалко!
Transliteration:	*Ptichku zhalko!*
Literal:	Bird sorry/pitiful
English:	Poor birdie!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used ironically to express mock sympathy or to point out someone receiving undeserved pity. Often said sarcastically about criminals or wrongdoers.

The Quartet (1951)	
Russian:	А вы, друзья, как ни садитесь, всё в музыканты не годитесь.
Transliteration:	*A vy, druz'ya, kak ni sadites', vsyo v muzykanty ne godites'.*
Literal:	And you, friends, how not sit, all to musicians not fit
English:	And you, my friends, however you sit, you'll never make good musicians.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used when people attempt tasks they're not qualified for, no matter how they organize themselves. Suggests

	incompetence can't be fixed by rearrangement.

Spring (1947)	
Russian:	Красота — страшная сила!
Transliteration:	*Krasota — strashnaya sila!*
Literal:	Beauty — terrible power
English:	Beauty is a terrible force!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Beauty has enormous power and influence. Used when someone's appearance has a strong effect on others or situations.

The Twelve Chairs (1971)	
Russian:	Утром деньги — вечером стулья, вечером деньги — утром стулья.
Transliteration:	*Utrom den'gi — vecherom stul'ya, vecherom den'gi — utrom stul'ya.*
Literal:	Morning money — evening chairs, evening money — morning chairs
English:	Money in the morning, chairs in the evening; money in the evening, chairs in the morning.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A formula for fair business dealings: payment and delivery must happen simultaneously or in agreed order. Used about keeping promises and honest transactions.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Муля, не нервируй меня!
Transliteration:	*Mulya, ne nerviruy menya!*
Literal:	Mulya, not nerve me
English:	Mulya, don't get on my nerves!
Common Expression:	**Yes**

Meaning & Usage:	Stop irritating me! Used when someone is being annoying. The character name 'Mulya' adds humor but the phrase works without knowing the reference.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Украл, выпил — в тюрьму!
Transliteration:	*Ukral, vypil — v tyur'mu!*
Literal:	Stole, drank — to prison
English:	Stole something, drank it away—to jail!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A mock-serious pronouncement of swift justice. Used humorously about consequences for bad behavior, especially related to theft or drinking.

Kidnapping, Caucasian Style (1967)	
Russian:	Чей туфля? Моё!
Transliteration:	*Chey tuflya? Moyo!*
Literal:	Whose shoe? Mine!
English:	Whose shoe? Mine!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used humorously when someone claims ownership of something, especially in broken grammar. The grammatical errors (mixing genders) are part of the joke.

Carlson Returns (1970)	
Russian:	Спокойствие, только спокойствие!
Transliteration:	*Spokoystviye, tol'ko spokoystviye!*
Literal:	Calmness, only calmness
English:	Calm down, just stay calm!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A call to remain calm in stressful situations. Widely used as a humorous way to tell someone (or oneself) not to panic.

Woe from Wit (1977)	
Russian:	Счастливые часов не наблюдают.
Transliteration:	*Schastlivyye chasov ne nablyudayut.*
Literal:	Happy [people] hours not observe
English:	Happy people don't watch the clock.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	When you're happy, time flies and you don't notice it passing. Used to suggest that someone who's constantly checking time isn't truly enjoying themselves.

Beware of the Automobile (1966)	
Russian:	Совесть — это когда вовремя вспомнить.
Transliteration:	*Sovest' — eto kogda vovremya vspomnit'.*
Literal:	Conscience — this is when in-time remember
English:	Conscience is when you remember in time.
Common Expression:	**No**
Meaning & Usage:	A philosophical observation about moral consciousness and acting ethically before it's too late.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Руссо туристо, облико морале!
Transliteration:	*Russo turisto, obliko morale!*
Literal:	Russian tourist, appearance moral
English:	Russian tourist, keep up appearances!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Mock-Italian gibberish used humorously. Originally about maintaining dignity abroad, now used ironically about keeping up appearances.

The Irony of Fate (1975)	
Russian:	Кто не работает, тот не ест!
Transliteration:	*Kto ne rabotayet, tot ne yest!*
Literal:	Who not works, that-one not eats
English:	He who doesn't work, doesn't eat!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A Soviet work ethic principle. Used to criticize laziness or justify that people must earn their keep.

The Irony of Fate (1975)	
Russian:	Вас много, а я одна!
Transliteration:	*Vas mnogo, a ya odna!*
Literal:	You many, but I one
English:	There are many of you, but I'm alone!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used when someone feels overwhelmed by demands or criticism from multiple people. Often said with frustration or exhaustion.

Seventeen Moments of Spring (1973)	
Russian:	В споре рождается истина.
Transliteration:	*V spore rozhdayetsya istina.*
Literal:	In dispute is-born truth
English:	Truth is born in dispute.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Through debate and discussion, the truth emerges. Used to justify arguing as a way to reach understanding.

Cinderella (1947)	
Russian:	Я не волшебник, я только учусь.
Transliteration:	*Ya ne volshebnik, ya tol'ko uchus'.*
Literal:	I not wizard, I only learn
English:	I'm not a wizard, I'm still learning.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A humble disclaimer when someone expects you to perform miracles. Used to manage expectations and admit limitations.

Chasing Two Hares (1961)	
Russian:	Главное, чтобы костюмчик сидел!
Transliteration:	*Glavnoye, chtoby kostyumchik sidel!*
Literal:	Main-thing, that suit-diminutive sat
English:	The main thing is that the suit fits well!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Ironically prioritizing appearance over substance. Used to mock superficial concerns about looking good rather than being good.

Well, Just You Wait! (1969)	
Russian:	Ну, погоди!
Transliteration:	*Nu, pogodi!*
Literal:	Well, wait!
English:	Just you wait!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A playful threat or warning. Used when promising future retaliation or consequences, often humorously.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	А может, не надо?
Transliteration:	*A mozhet, ne nado?*
Literal:	And maybe, not necessary?
English:	Or maybe we shouldn't?
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used to express doubt or suggest reconsidering a questionable action. Often said timidly when something seems like a bad idea.

The Twelve Chairs (1971)	
Russian:	Граждане, храните деньги в сберегательной кассе!
Transliteration:	*Grazhdane, khranite den'gi v sberegatel'noy kasse!*
Literal:	Citizens, keep money in savings bank
English:	Citizens, keep your money in the savings bank!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Mockery of Soviet propaganda slogans. Used ironically about trusting institutions or following official advice.

The Irony of Fate (1975)	
Russian:	Икра чёрная, икра красная, икра заморская, баклажанная!
Transliteration:	*Ikra chyornaya, ikra krasnaya, ikra zamorskaya, baklazhannaya!*
Literal:	Caviar black, caviar red, caviar overseas, eggplant
English:	Black caviar, red caviar, overseas caviar, eggplant!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used to describe abundance or listing varieties of something, often with the humorous twist that the last item doesn't quite fit.

Lenin in October (1937)	
Russian:	Мы пойдём другим путём!
Transliteration:	*My poydyom drugim putyom!*
Literal:	We will-go other path
English:	We will take a different path!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Declaring intention to choose an alternative approach. Historically significant as a revolutionary statement, now used for any alternative strategy.

Ivan Vasilievich Changes Profession (1973)	
Russian:	Будьте как дома, но не забывайте, что вы в гостях.
Transliteration:	*Bud'te kak doma, no ne zabyvayte, chto vy v gostyakh.*
Literal:	Be like at-home, but not forget, that you at guests
English:	Make yourself at home, but don't forget you're a guest.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A polite reminder to guests to be comfortable but respectful. Used to set boundaries while being welcoming.

Elder Son (1975)	
Russian:	Ну что, порвали тузик грелку!
Transliteration:	*Nu chto, porvali tuzik grelku!*
Literal:	Well what, tore Tuzik hot-water-bottle
English:	Well, Tuzik (the dog) tore the hot water bottle!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used when something has gone completely wrong or broken down. Implies an irreparable mess or ruined situation.

The Return of the Prodigal Parrot (1984)	
Russian:	Свободу попугаям!
Transliteration:	*Svobodu popugayam!*
Literal:	Freedom to-parrots
English:	Freedom to parrots!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A humorous slogan used to mock empty political demands or to playfully advocate for something trivial.

The Caucasian Captive (1967)	
Russian:	Огласите весь список, пожалуйста.
Transliteration:	*Oglasite ves' spisok, pozhaluysta.*
Literal:	Announce whole list, please
English:	Please read out the entire list.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used when asking someone to fully explain or list everything, often implying suspicion that there's more than initially revealed.

The Golden Calf (1968)	
Russian:	Заграница нам поможет!
Transliteration:	*Zagranitsa nam pomozhet!*
Literal:	Abroad us will-help
English:	Foreign countries will help us!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Ironically expressing naive hope that external forces will solve problems. Used to mock unrealistic expectations of foreign aid.

The Adventures of Shurik (1965)	
Russian:	Пиф-паф, ой-ой-ой!
Transliteration:	*Pif-paf, oy-oy-oy!*
Literal:	Bang-bang, oh-oh-oh
English:	Bang-bang, ow-ow-ow!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A playful sound effect mimicking shooting and reaction. Used humorously in children's games or to describe quick action and consequence.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Щас спою!
Transliteration:	*Shchas spoyu!*
Literal:	Now will-sing
English:	I'll sing now!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A threat said before confessing or revealing information, often under pressure. Used humorously about being forced to tell the truth.

Operation Y (1965)	
Russian:	Надо, Федя, надо!
Transliteration:	*Nado, Fedya, nado!*
Literal:	Must, Fedya, must
English:	We must, Fedya, we must!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Insisting that something must be done despite reluctance or difficulty. Used to motivate or pressure someone into action.

Operation Y (1965)	
Russian:	Студентов отчислить, ректора разжаловать, декана — в крайнем случае, наградить.
Transliteration:	*Studentov otchislit', rektora razzhalovat', dekana — v kraynem sluchaye, nagradit'.*
Literal:	Students expel, rector demote, dean — in extreme case, reward
English:	Expel the students, demote the rector, and the dean—at most, reward him.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A bureaucratic hierarchy of punishments and rewards. Used to mock institutional injustice where lower ranks suffer while leaders escape consequences.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Поскользнулся, упал, очнулся — гипс.
Transliteration:	*Poskol'znulsya, upal, ochnulsya — gips.*
Literal:	Slipped, fell, came-to — cast
English:	I slipped, fell, came to—and I'm in a cast.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Describing a sudden accident with quick consequences. Used to explain injuries or mishaps in a condensed, dramatic way.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Бриллиантовая рука! У меня рука бриллиантовая!
Transliteration:	*Brilliantovaya ruka! U menya ruka brilliantovaya!*
Literal:	Diamond arm! At me arm diamond
English:	A diamond arm! I have a diamond arm!
Common Expression:	**No**

Meaning & Usage:	The title phrase of the film, referring to smuggled diamonds hidden in a cast on the protagonist's arm.

Ivan Vasilievich Changes Profession (1973)	
Russian:	Вот что крест животворящий делает!
Transliteration:	*Vot chto krest zhivotvoryashchiy delayet!*
Literal:	Here what cross life-giving does
English:	That's what the life-giving cross does!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used ironically to attribute miraculous powers to religious symbols or to mock superstition. Often said when something surprisingly works out.

The Irony of Fate (1975)	
Russian:	Ты заходи, если что!
Transliteration:	*Ty zakhodi, yesli chto!*
Literal:	You come-in, if something
English:	Drop by if anything!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A casual, open-ended invitation to visit. Used as a friendly farewell suggesting someone is always welcome.

Dead Souls (1984)	
Russian:	Какой русский не любит быстрой езды?
Transliteration:	*Kakoy russkiy ne lyubit bystroy yezdy?*
Literal:	What Russian not loves fast driving
English:	What Russian doesn't love fast driving?
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A rhetorical question about Russian character and love of speed and adventure. Originally from Gogol, popularized by film adaptations.

The Diamond Arm (1968)	
Russian:	Эх, прокачу!
Transliteration:	*Ekh, prokachu!*
Literal:	Oh, will-ride
English:	Oh, I'll take you for a ride!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Enthusiastically promising to give someone a thrilling experience, often driving fast or showing them a good time.

The Wedding in Malinovka (1967)	
Russian:	Прекрасная маркиза, всё хорошо, всё хорошо!
Transliteration:	*Prekrasnaya markiza, vsyo khorosho, vsyo khorosho!*
Literal:	Beautiful marchioness, all good, all good
English:	Beautiful Marchioness, all is well, all is well!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Used ironically when things are actually going terribly wrong but someone tries to maintain that everything is fine.

White Sun of the Desert (1970)	
Russian:	За державу обидно!
Transliteration:	*Za derzhavu obidno!*
Literal:	For state offensive/hurtful
English:	It's painful for the country!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Expressing shame or regret about the state of one's country. Used when national pride is wounded or things aren't as they should be.

The Meeting Place Cannot Be Changed (1979)	
Russian:	Ну и рожа у тебя, Шарапов!
Transliteration:	*Nu i rozha u tebya, Sharapov!*
Literal:	Well and mug at you, Sharapov
English:	What a mug you have, Sharapov!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A rough, informal comment about someone's face or expression. Used between close friends or in tough-guy contexts.

Seventeen Moments of Spring (1973)	
Russian:	Семнадцать мгновений весны.
Transliteration:	*Semnadtsat' mgnoveniy vesny.*
Literal:	Seventeen moments of-spring
English:	Seventeen moments of spring.
Common Expression:	**No**
Meaning & Usage:	The title of an iconic Soviet spy series. Used poetically to refer to brief, meaningful moments.

Moydodyr (1954)	
Russian:	Будешь плохо себя вести — отведу к Мойдодыру!
Transliteration:	*Budesh' plokho sebya vesti — otvedu k Moydodyru!*
Literal:	Will badly yourself behave — will-lead to Moydodyr
English:	If you behave badly, I'll take you to Moydodyr!
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	A threat used with children about hygiene. Moydodyr is a character who enforces cleanliness in a famous children's story.

Operation Y (1965)	
Russian:	Папа у Васи силён в математике.
Transliteration:	*Papa u Vasi silyon v matematike.*
Literal:	Dad at Vasya strong in mathematics
English:	Vasya's dad is strong in mathematics.
Common Expression:	**Yes**
Meaning & Usage:	Ironically commenting that someone had help (especially parental) with their work. Used to suggest someone didn't do their own homework or project.